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Strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The present report has been prepared pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/182 of 19 December 1991, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to report annually to it and to the Economic and Social Council on the coordination of humanitarian assistance, Council resolution 1995/56 of 28 July 1995, in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on humanitarian assistance, and subsequent resolutions.

2. The present report is also submitted in response to requests contained in Assembly resolutions 54/30 of 22 November 1999 on emergency response to disasters and 54/233 of 22 December 1999 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters from relief to development.

II. Coordination of humanitarian assistance, 1999-2000

A. Context

3. The past year has been marked by emergencies in which the predicted worst case scenario was far surpassed (among them East Timor, Kosovo, Mozambique and Venezuela), illustrating once again the need for effective contingency planning and a rapid-response or "surge" capacity among humanitarian agencies.

4. The number and scale of complex emergencies rose in the past year. Crises escalated or erupted in the Congo, the province of Kosovo, Yugoslavia in East Timor, in Chechnya, Russian Federation, and between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The protracted conflicts in Afghanistan, Angola, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Somalia, Sir Lanka and the Sudan all continued. The situation in Burundi deteriorated with the launch by the Government of a massive programme of forced relocation. The new crisis in Sierra Leone, which erupted in May 2000, will inevitably also have serious humanitarian consequences. In all of those conflicts, civilians bore the brunt of war, in many cases becoming victims of direct attacks, indiscriminate bombing, rape and sexual torture, forced relocation, other human rights violations and denial or restriction of access to humanitarian assistance.

5. On the positive side, conflicts abated and the situation stabilized in Guinea-Bissau and Congo, while the deployment of large multidimensional United Nations peacekeeping operations in East Timor and Kosovo signalled the end of open hostilities and brought significant improvements in the situation of civilians. In each case, however, humanitarian aid is still required and a long-term commitment of the United Nations system will be needed to ensure a stable peace and transition to sustainable development.

6. Natural disasters have once again wrought devastation in some of the poorest places on Earth. In Mongolia, unusually severe snowstorms wiped out hundreds of thousands of cattle, herds on which the people rely for their livelihood. The two earthquakes that struck Turkey in August and November 1999 killed some 18,000 people and injured almost 50,000 in the north-western part of the country. The cyclone in Orissa, India, resulted in the deaths of almost 10,000 people and affected over 12 million others in October 1999. The worst floods and mud slides in a century hit Venezuela in December 1999, where an estimated 25,000-40,000 were killed or reported missing. Another 600,000 people were affected by the catastrophe. In southern Africa, cyclones Eline and Gloria brought devastating flooding to parts of Botswana, Madagascar, South Africa, Zimbabwe and, most severely, Mozambique, where up to one million persons were affected.

7. As the present report was being prepared, humanitarian agencies were mounting a major response to drought in the Horn of Africa, which could threaten the lives of some 12.3 million people in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan and Uganda. In April 2000, in order to coordinate the initial response to the disaster, the Secretary-General appointed the Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP) Special Envoy to the region. Her mission, on behalf of the United Nations system as a whole, enabled the Emergency Relief Coordinator to establish a strong regional coordinating structure to address the situation. On her recommendation, a regional humanitarian coordinator based in Addis Ababa was appointed. In order to address longer-term issues, the Secretary-General appointed the Director-General of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) to chair a task force on the United Nations response to long-term food security, agricultural development and related aspects in the

Horn of Africa in relation to the drought crisis. The task force will develop a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the effects of recurrent drought and achieve lasting food security in the region.

8. During the past year, international humanitarian agencies have once again been stretched to the limit in their efforts to bring timely relief to stricken communities. Within the context of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, agencies have constantly looked for ways of ensuring a more efficient, effective and coordinated response, by working to strengthen legal and physical protection; by addressing resource constraints on assistance; by improving consistency with United Nations political and development action; and by strengthening coordination tools and activities. Those efforts require consistent support from international donors, including for the "forgotten" emergencies.

9. In this environment of severe demands on international humanitarian agencies, a steadily increasing proportion of humanitarian aid is being delivered bilaterally rather than through multilateral channels. This report argues that continued strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance requires adequate resources for multilateral assistance programmes alongside essential bilateral aid. Member States are invited to reconfirm the importance of strengthening multilateral channels for humanitarian assistance.

B. Coordinated response to complex emergencies

10. This section reports on the coordinated activities of the members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in response to humanitarian emergencies during the past year, with special focus on those activities carried out in support of the agreed conclusions of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council held in July 1999.[1]

Strengthening coordination tools

11. Improved humanitarian coordination during the past year came in part from the development of innovative approaches to coordination. Major emergencies in East Timor and Kosovo highlighted the need for flexibility and rapid response. To support the lead role of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Balkans, the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat seconded personnel to perform coordination functions. This included help with the creation of the emergency management group in Albania and later in Kosovo the creation of an inter-agency coordination unit within UNHCR, a geographic information system (GIS)-based joint assessment project and the establishment of a humanitarian community information centre. Support to the Balkans by the Office included the establishment of the Office of the Regional Coordinator for the United Nations in the Balkans in May 1999 to coordinate all United Nations activities in the humanitarian, economic, social, environmental and human rights sectors in response to the crisis in Kosovo province and its impact on the region. In response to the crisis in East Timor, a senior humanitarian coordinator, leading an inter-agency team of specialists contributed by different Inter-Agency Standing Committee members, was immediately deployed to East Timor. This provided a critical coordination service until such time as the humanitarian component of the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor could be established. A similar approach was used in response to the floods in Mozambique. Within the context of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, it will be necessary to draw lessons learned from these experiences.

12. The United Nations interdepartmental Framework for Coordination Team, consisting originally of the Department of Political Affairs, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and later also the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has increased its membership to include UNHCR, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP, the World Health Organization (WHO) and FAO. The aim is to support preventive action and to develop improved mechanisms for early warning, contingency planning and preparedness. Several fact-finding and contingency planning missions have been undertaken on behalf of the Framework for Coordination Team to increase the state of preparedness of United Nations country teams in the event of a humanitarian crisis.

13. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council requested that further work be undertaken to strengthen the consolidated appeal process in the areas of prioritization and strategic

monitoring and by the inclusion of requirements for the security of humanitarian personnel. A comprehensive review of the process was carried out between November 1999 and April 2000. The exercise was based on consultations with humanitarian coordinators, members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and donors. Recommendations focused on increasing flexibility, improving financial tracking and impact analysis and advocacy and marketing of appeals. Recognizing that the consolidated appeal process is a key tool for coordination of the international response to emergencies, a group of donors met in Montreux in March 2000 to contribute their perspective to the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. They agreed that more emphasis should be placed on the consolidated appeal process as a continuous year-round process of inter-agency coordination. Key components should include joint assessments, monitoring and result-based evaluation. Donors also recognized the value of their becoming increasingly engaged in the process, through informal donor consultations in the field and at headquarters, to address strategic and funding issues. They also recognized the need to create greater awareness of the significance of the consolidated appeal process within their own ministries and to address internal bureaucratic challenges to funding gaps. The meeting also recommended increased involvement of non-governmental organizations in the strategy-setting process.

14. For the first time the cost of security requirements was included in the consolidated appeals for 2000, namely, a total of $8.5 million for 10 countries and regions. As at 19 May 2000, $1,998,492 (23.5 per cent) had been pledged and/or received in response to the appeals. However, not all appeals included provision for security arrangements. It is envisaged that all future appeals will contain a comprehensive account of the security arrangements proposed and their cost.

15. Although nearly 75 per cent of the requirements in the 1999 consolidated appeals were provided for, a considerable improvement over recent years, the response to the 2000 appeals has so far been disappointing. As at 19 May 2000, the overall response stood at 26.8 per cent, in spite of efforts that have led to acknowledged improvements in the quality of the appeals.

16. To further strengthen the consolidated appeal process, work is proposed in the coming year on developing more consistent treatment of thematic issues, including the mainstreaming of gender, security of staff and the question of internal displacement. However, there also remains a need to develop more innovative approaches to mobilizing resources for the "forgotten" emergencies.

17. A number of country teams are working actively on a coordinated response to situations that fluctuate between crisis and development or where the prospects of renewed crisis are considerable. The main frameworks for such coordination are the consolidated appeal process, the United Nations development assistance framework, the World Bank's Comprehensive Development Framework and the strategic frameworks. In discussions about countries in special development situations, it is becoming important to avoid the risk of "framework overload' by clarifying and streamlining those processes. The General Assembly's appeal in 1999 for a comprehensive approach to countries in crisis should also be understood to include a comprehensive approach to coordination mechanisms.

18. The Central Emergency Revolving Fund continues to play a valuable role in enabling agencies to start emergency work, before pledged funds are actually received. Between 1 January 1999 and 24 May 2000, a total of $33,682,500 was advanced for activities in 11 countries or regions.

19. In response to the Economic and Social Council's recommendation regarding strategic monitoring, initiatives are under way with the United Nations country teams in Afghanistan and Somalia. Headquarters support to those efforts will ensure cross-fertilization of ideas, identify key lessons and propose an approach with general applicability to countries in crisis. One early conclusion is that strategic monitoring programmes are most relevant in the context of long-standing crises, where year-to-year progress can be measured against baseline data.

Consistency between humanitarian, political, human rights and development action

20. The United Nations has taken a number of steps to ensure a more coherent approach between the humanitarian, political and human rights components of the international response to particular crises, as recommended in the agreed conclusions 1999/1 of the Economic and Social Council. This section can be read

in conjunction with the report of the Secretary-General to the Council on operational activities (E/2000/46/Add.1), which also addresses the issue.

21. These steps take as their starting point the importance of a comprehensive approach to each specific conflict situation. The essential components of that approach involve at one level a partnership between the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council and at another the search for consistency between the political, humanitarian, development and human rights bodies of the United Nations system and beyond. While the Security Council promotes peaceful solutions to conflict, compliance with international humanitarian law, unimpeded access to humanitarian aid for the victims and the security of humanitarian personnel, the Economic and Social Council must strive to ensure a rational distribution of tasks. A consistent message from different intergovernmental bodies, a commitment to the coordination and leadership role of multilateral actors and above all adequate resources for carrying out the agreed tasks are required.

22. In East Timor and Kosovo that consistency has been achieved through the establishment of integrated peace operations, in which the humanitarian component or pillar has been established under the responsibility of a deputy special representative of the Secretary-General, alongside the mission components for civil administration, governance and reconstruction, the police and military forces. A United Nations development coordinator has also been appointed to ensure complementarity of efforts and to lay the ground for sustainable development.

23. In Sierra Leone, a strategic framework is being developed, that takes into account the respective roles of the political/military mission, the assistance agencies and the human rights organizations, seeking to ensure that each is able to contribute effectively to the overall goal of peace-building. However, there is concern among some organizations that the independence and impartiality of humanitarian activities could be compromised if they were to become too closely associated with the political process. Yet there remains a general understanding that the efforts of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the humanitarian community on the ground must be seen as complementary and mutually reinforcing. Notwithstanding the events of May 2000, the Secretary-General is of the view that the strategic framework provides the opportunity to clarify the relationship between the political, humanitarian, development and human rights mandates of the United Nations, making it clear that their activities support each other, and are intended to facilitate the promotion of peace and sustainable development.

24. The humanitarian affairs segment of the Council in 1999 focused on the importance of linking relief aid to sustainable development. A major focus of the work of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in 1999-2000 has been to implement the agreed conclusions developed in that context. Under the leadership of UNDP, an Inter-Agency Standing Committee reference group produced a detailed report identifying five major interrelated areas or "gaps" affecting post-conflict reintegration and rehabilitation operations. These relate to the inadequacy of national capacities; the political priorities of bilateral donors; unsynchronized transitional funding; the planning and programming of transitional activities by agencies; and inadequate efforts to reach agreements based on common strategic objectives.

25. Guided by the findings of the report, four countries were identified by the Reference Group, based on their varying levels of post-conflict funding and on their different coordination structures, namely, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Congo and Somalia. Inter-agency missions took place during April and May 2000 to those countries in order to identify creative and practical solutions to the problems associated with post-conflict transitions and relief to development linkages. Donors participated in some of these missions through the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development Assistance Committee Task Force. It is foreseen that the missions will lead to the development of comprehensive guidelines tailored to post-conflict crisis situations that will address shortcomings in coordination and funding mechanisms in a practical manner.

26. While the Inter-Agency Standing Committee process has focused on the operational aspects of post-conflict reintegration, participants in the Brookings Round Table organized by UNHCR and the World Bank in Paris on 7 July 1999, in collaboration with UNDP and the donor community, are making efforts to address the financial and institutional constraints that have characterized transitional or post-conflict situations. The initial focus is on Sierra Leone and the neighbouring countries of Guinea and Liberia, which

will serve as a pilot case for support from participants at the Round Table. Unfortunately, the crisis in Sierra Leone that began in May 2000 has jeopardized the peace-building process. Intensified efforts by the international community are likely to be all the more necessary once the peace process is able to resume.

27. Disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programmes are generally directly linked to a successful peace process as they can provide the requisite level of security necessary for the successful transition from emergency situations to sustainable peace. The Executive Committee for Humanitarian Affairs is finalizing a paper with particular focus on the assignment of responsibilities in such efforts. However, several programmes continue to face constraints owing to shortages of resources for the reintegration of demobilized soldiers.

28. Another major development in post-conflict efforts is the growing use by the Security Council of peace-building support offices, such as those in Liberia and Guinea-Bissau, which constitute an important commitment to sustaining the process of peace implementation and the fundamental task of transition. However, the success of the peace-building support offices is constrained by lack of funding, not so much for the offices themselves as for the transitional programmes undertaken by operational agencies that the offices are designed to support.

29. Indeed, a continuing major constraint in overall transitional efforts is the lack of progress made by Member States regarding the agreed conclusions on transitional funding. In that context, efforts by the United Nations to coordinate programming and funding requests have not been matched by more timely funding. For example, in East Timor, notwithstanding joint presentations of emergency and recovery funding needs, efforts continue to be hampered by inadequate resources and slow disbursement of funds. A similar situation exists in Kosovo. In Sierra Leone, slow disbursement of funds for demobilization inevitably led to delays in the process of disarming fighters.

30. In the specific context of the Balkans, a number of arrangements are in place to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive approach by the United Nations and other interested partners in planning the transition from humanitarian emergency assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction in the Balkans, as called for in the 1999 agreed conclusions. The Administrator of UNDP presented an update on the strengthening of the coordinated transition process in the Balkans during a briefing open to all Member States on 9 February 2000.

31. The United Nations consolidated inter-agency appeal for the south-eastern Europe humanitarian operation promotes an integrated regional approach that supports the resolution of local crises and the stabilization of the broader region. That approach is also consistent with the European Union initiative to promote democracy, economic prosperity, stabilization and regional cooperation under the stability pact for south-eastern Europe. The United Nations also participates fully in the overall donor coordination processes led by the World Bank and the European Commission and in other established mechanisms for south-eastern Europe such as the UNHCR-led Humanitarian Issues Working Group, now affiliated with the stability pact process.

Protection of civilians in armed conflict

32. A major element of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's work in the past year has been to work to strengthen both legal and physical protection for civilians caught up in situations of armed conflict. In September 1999, the Secretary-General submitted to the Security Council a report on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/1999/957), which contained 40 recommendations intended to improve the situation of civilian victims of armed conflict. Subsequently, the report was transmitted to the General Assembly (A/54/619). The Security Council established an expert working group to review the recommendations relating to the physical protection of civilians. On 19 April 2000, the Council adopted resolution 1296 (2000), complementing resolution 1265 (1999) of 17 September 1999. In those resolutions, the Security Council confirmed its responsibility to seek to ensure the protection of civilians in armed conflict and identified a number of options for action that it has agreed to consider in specific situations where the lives of civilians are threatened. Additionally in its resolution 1261 (1999) of 25 August 1999, the Security Council undertook to give special attention to the protection, welfare and rights of children when taking action to promote peace and security. Those resolutions constitute a significant milestone in the humanitarian community's long-standing efforts to ensure that the political causes of

humanitarian crises are addressed through political action.

33. Enhancing the protection of civilians in armed conflict is a multi-faceted task, requiring cooperation between many parties on a wide range of issues. One of the most important is the effort to bring war criminals to justice. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council urged Member States to sign and ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.[2] As at 30 April 2000, 95 States had signed the Statute, while only 8 had ratified it. In view of the important successes achieved by the International Tribunals for Rwanda and the Former Yugoslavia in bringing war criminals to justice, the Council may wish to urge Member States to accelerate the process of ratification of the Rome Statute, so that the Court may be established in the shortest possible time and begin to respond to war crimes committed in other conflicts, ensuing universality in the application of legal protection. Member States that have not yet signed the Statute may wish to take advantage of the Millennium Assembly to do so.

34. While seeking to strengthen the laws and norms for protection, humanitarian agencies have been witnesses in the past year to serious violations of human rights in most of the countries in which they seek to deliver humanitarian assistance. Civilians have been deliberately targeted for attacks, abducted, raped, forcibly relocated or denied access to assistance in Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Chechnya, Colombia, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, East Timor, Kosovo, Sierra Leone and the Sudan.

35. To bring help to the victims, humanitarian organizations have recognized that a range of different strategies may be appropriate, depending on the precise circumstances. In Angola, following a mission mandated by the Secretary-General, the Emergency Relief Coordinator initiated an urgent review of coordination arrangements, which led to a number of initiatives by the Humanitarian Coordinator and the agencies to strengthen support to the internally displaced. As regards Burundi, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee issued a statement in February 2000 urging the Government immediately to commence dismantlement of the relocation sites to which 340,000 people had been forcibly moved since September 1999. At the request of the Committee, the Representative of the Secretary-General for Internally Displaced Persons undertook an urgent mission to the country to urge the authorities to dismantle the *regroupement* camps. The process of dismantling the camps was in fact initiated during the Representative's mission. In relation to the situation in Chechnya, the Secretary-General requested the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to undertake a mission as his Special Envoy to seek improvements in the overall humanitarian situation in the northern Caucasus.

36. In addition, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee recognized that humanitarian agencies, while maintaining a strict distinction between their role and the role of human rights organizations, should nevertheless implement their humanitarian activities in ways that will help to protect the human rights of victims of conflict. The Committee's Reference Group on Humanitarian Action and Human Rights has therefore initiated a study aimed at identifying examples of good practice, which will be published in the form of a field practices manual.

Access, principles of engagement and security of personnel

37. In its work in support of stronger protection frameworks, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has sought to tackle specific constraints to the delivery of humanitarian assistance. Key problems include denial or restriction of access and lack of security for personnel.

38. The availability of secure access to those in need of humanitarian assistance, under conditions consistent with the provisions of international humanitarian law and with the principles contained in General Assembly resolution 46/182, is an essential precondition for successful humanitarian operations. The importance of safe and unimpeded access both of targeted vulnerable civilians to humanitarian assistance and of humanitarian staff to those affected groups cannot be over-emphasized. The negotiation of access may often be facilitated if all parties to the conflict agree with the humanitarian organizations on the conditions under which that access is to be granted. For example, in Somalia "ground rules" are being developed that would formalize the understanding between warring parties on the one hand and humanitarian organizations on the other regarding the conditions under which humanitarian aid would be delivered. In relation to *regroupement* camps in Burundi, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee endorsed a clear policy on the conditions under which humanitarian agencies would

provide assistance. Such agreements continue to provide a platform for humanitarian action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and elsewhere. However, it must be recognized that those rules do not always translate into improved access to beneficiaries and that parties to those conflicts need to be continuously engaged in order to ensure that access is sustained.

39. The safety of humanitarian personnel is another precondition for effective humanitarian operations. Since 1992, 184 staff members of the United Nations have lost their lives. In the last year alone, 17 United Nations staff met with violent deaths during the course of their duties, culminating in the deliberate murder of 2 humanitarian staff in Burundi in October 1999. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council called on all parties to take measures to ensure the safety and security of all humanitarian personnel. In its resolution 54/192 of 17 December 1999, the General Assembly recognized the responsibility of States to ensure the safety of humanitarian personnel and recommended a number of specific measures. These included a call on all States to become parties to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (resolution 49/59, annex). To date, 43 States have signed the Convention, while 29 States have ratified it. The Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report containing a detailed analysis and recommendations addressing the scope of legal protection under the Convention. That analysis will be submitted to the Assembly in a separate report.

40. In resolution 54/192 the General Assembly recognized the need for a full-time United Nations security coordinator. The Secretary-General has announced his intention of making such an appointment and a comprehensive review of all aspects of United Nations security arrangements has been initiated under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General. The results of that review will be submitted to the Assembly at its fifty-fifth session in the comprehensive report on security of personnel.

Gender

41. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council recognized that humanitarian emergencies have direct and particular impacts on women and gender relations, and stressed the need to integrate a gender perspective in the planning and implementation of activities pertaining to the transition phase.

42. Following the approval of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee policy statement on gender in May 1999, an inter-agency workshop aimed at developing tools to integrate gender into the consolidated appeal process was held in Geneva in July 1999. Country team members from Angola, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Tajikistan participated in the workshop and helped to develop a checklist to integrate gender into needs assessments and planning of humanitarian assistance activities. As a result, a number of improvements were made in the 2000 consolidated appeals for those countries, such as including gender mainstreaming as a guiding principle for humanitarian action in Angola; including gender mainstreaming as a common long-term humanitarian goal and defining actions to be taken and indicators to measure progress in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; and supporting women's non-governmental organizations in order to improve the status of women and children in Tajikistan.

43. In order to ascertain, a year after its adoption, whether the gender policy had had an impact at the field level and whether or not its provisions had been implemented, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee decided in April 2000 to request its Sub-Working Group on Gender and Humanitarian Response to review the implementation of the policy statement, including the mainstreaming of gender issues in the consolidated appeal process. The Sub-Working Group is currently preparing a package of resource documents to assist United Nations country teams in mainstreaming gender into humanitarian action (see also paras. 79 and 80).

Children

44. Following the recommendation in the agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee plans to convene a reference group on children in armed conflict in late 2000. The group would seek to develop tools for assessing child protection concerns in conflict situations, analyse the inclusion of children's concerns in the consolidated appeals and develop the issue of training in child rights for peacekeeping staff.

45. In line with its resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1265 (1999), the Security Council included the protection of

children in the mandates of the peacekeeping operations for Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo), two conflict areas where children are suffering on a massive scale as a result of war. With the support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, child protection advisers were appointed as integral elements of these two peacekeeping operations. The Secretary-General will submit a report to the Security Council on the implementation of resolution 1261 (1999) in July 2000.

46. After five years of deliberations, an Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (resolution 44/25, annex) on the involvement of children in armed conflict was adopted by the General Assembly on 25 May 2000 (resolution 54/263, annex I), raising the minimum age for compulsory recruitment and participation in direct conflict from 15 to 18, applicable to both State and non-State actors. The optional protocol also categorically prohibits non-State actors from recruiting and deploying persons under age 18. It provides a strong legal basis for curbing child soldiering on the ground. A concerted international movement is now required to exert pressure on all parties in conflicts that use children as combatants. In parallel, adequate and sustained resources should be provided for demobilization, psychosocial recovery and social reintegration programmes for children forced to participate in war.

47. A number of inter-agency initiatives have been taken to promote the rights and welfare of children in conflict situations. Examples include Action for the Rights of Children, a joint UNHCR — Save the Children Alliance training and capacity-building initiative also involving UNICEF and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the inter-agency group on unaccompanied and separated children, which is preparing policy guidelines for organizations working in this field; and the joint UNHCR/UNICEF Liberia children's initiative, which addresses the particular integration needs of children and youth in the main areas of return.

Older persons

48. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council recognized older persons as a specific vulnerable group in humanitarian emergencies and requested that measures be taken to ensure that they are not marginalized in the course of relief operations. A background note on the elderly and humanitarian emergencies was considered by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In February 2000 it was agreed that WHO would lead a task force to draw up an account of agency action in support of elderly victims of humanitarian emergencies. Additionally, UNHCR formulated a policy for elderly refugees that will endeavour to address the protection and assistance needs of older persons of concern to UNHCR in a gender-sensitive manner and ensure their equality of access to all measures that will promote participation and well being.

C. Coordination of the international response to natural disasters

49. In its resolutions 54/30 on emergency response to disasters and 54/233 on international cooperation on humanitarian assistance in the field of natural disasters from relief to development, the General Assembly re-emphasized that national authorities have primary responsibility for coordinating relief efforts following natural disasters, while the Emergency Relief Coordinator is the focal point for coordination of the international response. Most international aid given in response to natural disasters is provided bilaterally between Member States, a trend that has increased in recent years. The Emergency Relief Coordinator is now faced with increasing difficulties in coordinating the international effort. Multilateral support provided through United Nations agencies provides an effective means of ensuring a coordinated and effective humanitarian response to natural disasters. The management of the joint logistics centres in East Timor and Mozambique and the provision of logistics services by WFP for the whole humanitarian community in those countries demonstrated the value of channelling support through United Nations agencies.

50. In its agreed conclusions 1999/1, the Economic and Social Council emphasized that disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be strengthened further at the country and regional levels. A number of steps outlined below have been taken to further that objective.

51. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has created a reference group on natural disasters so that issues related to natural disaster response can be

reviewed in an inter-agency context. The reference group is examining the various procedures members of the Committee follow when responding to disasters, seeking greater coherence between them. Assessment capacities, funding mechanisms, information-sharing, logistics and telecommunications are all being reviewed.

Strengthening of disaster response

52. Donor response to natural disasters is often uneven geographically and sectorally. Efforts have been made to strengthen the inter-agency appeals, which are issued by the United Nations following large-scale disasters, so that the donor community can respond more objectively to the requirements listed. While some success has been achieved, considerable work is still needed to encourage donor Governments to support what may be perceived as transitional or early rehabilitation activities, but which are essential components of an effective short-term response.

53. In response to the floods in Mozambique, the Central Emergency Revolving Fund was utilized to support the relief effort. In that instance, $4 million was advanced to the United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office to support action by several agencies. In addition, funds were also mobilized from the United Nations Fund for International Partnerships to support the operation in Mozambique.

54. Among the other steps taken to enhance the response to disasters has been the appointment of regional natural disaster response advisers in Asia, Latin America and the Pacific. They advise and assist Governments and regional networks in preparedness measures for natural disaster response. In the case of disasters, the advisers arrange for the deployment of United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams from within the region and elsewhere in the world. During the last year the effectiveness of that arrangement was demonstrated in the United Nations response to the mud slides in Venezuela and the earthquake/tsunami in Vanuatu in December 1999, the earthquake in China and the snowstorms in Mongolia in February 2000 and the drought in Paraguay in March 2000.

55. In recognition of the increasing use of military assets in humanitarian operations, on 18 and 19 May 2000, the Office of the Coordinator for Humanitarian Affairs organized a seminar in Brussels, hosted by NATO, to analyse lessons learned relating to the Guidelines on the Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Response of May 1994. The seminar confirmed the basic principles for the use of military assets in disaster response.

56. The Governments of Greece and Turkey have been engaged in establishing a joint standby disaster response unit that would operate under the guidance of the United Nations. Each Government is strengthening its respective crisis management centre to serve as a focal point in times of natural disaster, such as earthquakes, floods, avalanches and landslides.

Strengthening early warning systems

57. Several efforts are under way to assist Governments in strengthening their early warning systems, notably in Ethiopia and Viet Nam. In Ethiopia, for example, a United Nations-sponsored emergencies unit provides technical advice and support to the Government on early warning monitoring and provides information alerting national and international partners to potential man-made or natural disasters in the region, including the current drought.

58. Information technology can assist in the development of effective early warning systems, an essential component in disaster management efforts. To promote early warning, humanitarian agencies are participating in a number of initiatives to promote the use of modern technologies. Some of those initiatives are described in section III below. Work in that area will also be a priority activity of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction.

Reducing vulnerabilities

59. The Economic and Social Council has emphasized the need for further concrete measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards. A number of specific activities have been undertaken in response to that recommendation.

60. At the international level, a comparative country index of vulnerability and disaster risk is being prepared as part of a UNDP initiative to develop a global disaster vulnerability report, which aims to promote national efforts to mitigate risks. An inter-agency initiative is also under way to develop a core set of concepts, principles and general guidelines to facilitate inter-agency collaboration in disaster reduction issues.

61. An international partnership, the ProVention Consortium, was launched by the World Bank on 3 and 4 February 2000, with the aim of reducing the human and economic costs of natural disasters in the developing world. The partnership seeks to promote a culture of safety and to support public policies that reduce risks. It also plans to support proven pilot projects to mitigate disasters, to help develop Governments' ability to minimize disasters and respond effectively when they occur and to forge linkages between the public and private sectors and other stakeholders.

62. The secretariat of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction, which reports to the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, organized the first meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Disaster Reduction on 27 and 28 April 2000 in Geneva, whose membership consists of United Nations agencies, regional bodies, and representatives of civil society. The Task Force discussed ways to implement the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction adopted by the Programme Forum of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction in July 1999 and endorsed by the General Assembly in its resolution 54/219 of 22 December 1999. The Task Force agreed on a number of areas of common concern on which members should focus in order to implement the strategy at the international, regional, national and local levels. The Task Force also established working groups in the areas of early warning, El Niño/La Niña and quantification of risk and vulnerability and impact of future disasters, including insurability, and measuring the economic and environmental cost of disasters.

63. The United Nations, in close collaboration with the Organization for African Unity (OAU), is planning a symposium on natural disaster management to take place in Addis Ababa in June 2000. The symposium will consider guidelines to reduce the increasing social, economic and environmental impacts related to natural disasters in Africa. Efforts are under way to enable communities to become more resilient to the effects of natural disasters and to implement early warning, contingency planning and preparedness systems across the continent.

64. With respect to small island nations, a comprehensive vulnerability analysis is being done in Monserrat of those areas being resettled following the volcanic eruptions of 1997. That analysis will enable disaster risk considerations to be fully factored into land use planning and construction, ensuring that future vulnerability is greatly reduced. Efforts are also being undertaken to strengthen the disaster management capacities of the Pacific island countries with a view to transferring more of the responsibilities to a regional entity. In Haiti, a national risk management plan has been drawn up with the assistance of UNDP, which has strengthened capacities for local-level risk management in several departments of the country through the adoption of a training methodology.

65. In Central America, following hurricane Mitch, a disaster reduction strategy was developed in partnership with the Centre for the Coordination of Natural Disaster Prevention in Central America. It included regional- and national-level activities that address issues such as strengthening early warning capacities, local-level risk management and national legislative and administrative systems.

66. In the Caribbean, UNDP continues to support the disaster emergency response management system project, executed by the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), which has strengthened the capacity of the national disaster offices of CARICOM countries, as well as that of the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency as an information clearing house and disaster response organization.

Assessment

67. To ensure adequate assessment capacities, United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams are being strengthened by including more participants from countries in regions likely to be affected by disasters. Representatives from 11 countries in Latin America, 8 countries in the South Pacific and 2 countries in Africa are now part of the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination system. United Nations agencies are also active participants in the system, which now includes emergency managers from 31 countries and 5 organizations. United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams have been used over the past 12 months on 18 occasions to assist Governments in Asia, Africa, Europe, the Pacific and Latin America in responding to natural disasters.

68. To ensure adequate assessment and coordination during earthquakes, cooperation is being promoted between the United Nations disaster assessment and coordination system and the International Search and

Rescue Advisory Group, which represents search and rescue teams. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has helped the Group to activate its regional chapter in the region of Asia and the Pacific and to standardize procedures for international search and rescue teams responding to an earthquake, including the functioning of an on-site operations coordination centre.

Relief and development

69. The Economic and Social Council has reaffirmed the importance of coherent and effectively coordinated responses to humanitarian emergencies, in particular in the transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. Humanitarian and development organizations are contributing to the effort to implement that recommendation by promoting the use of transitional appeals as an inter-agency tool, as successfully applied after hurricane Mitch and the Mozambique floods.

70. Recent major natural disasters in India, Mozambique, Turkey and Venezuela are further examples where humanitarian and development agencies are working to coordinate their efforts to assist Governments to move into rapid recovery and subsequent development programmes. The example of Mozambique is described in more detail in annex II.

D. Emerging challenges in natural disasters and complex emergency response

71. Events over the past year have confronted humanitarian agencies with a number of new or resurgent challenges. Those challenges pertain to the multiple sources and dimensions of civilian suffering as a result of crisis and the growing number of actors involved in crisis response and will require particular attention in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, and from Member States, during the coming year.

72. As noted in the introduction to the present section, there is a growing challenge to coordination, in both natural disaster and complex emergency situations, arising from the increasing number of actors — regional, subregional and bilateral — involved in the provision of humanitarian assistance and protection. That challenge arises from a success, namely, the increasingly widespread support that exists for humanitarian efforts, the increases in the overall level of humanitarian aid and the growing interest of a range of actors, including the private sector, in being involved in humanitarian operations. Challenges arising from that positive development include the fact that the growing number of those involved increases the complexity of coordination. Research commissioned by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs for the Inter-Agency Standing Committee indicates that, in the 10 years from 1988 to 1998, while the amounts of international humanitarian assistance provided through multilateral channels remained roughly constant and overall levels of humanitarian aid increased substantially, the proportion of international humanitarian aid delivered through multilateral channels declined from 45 per cent to about 25 per cent. The tendency of some Member States to deliver a high proportion of their humanitarian aid through international non-governmental organizations based in their own countries not only makes coordination of the international response more difficult, but may also lead to missed opportunities to strengthen national and local coping mechanisms in the affected countries. Other factors compounding the difficulties in coordination include the differences in operating cultures, mandates and priorities of the large number of operational organizations, as well as lack of clarity about boundaries of cooperation. In order to avoid such problems, Member States may wish to emphasize the importance of committing adequate resources through multilateral channels.

73. Member States are increasingly recognizing the opportunities for peacetime uses of military capabilities. The response to some recent natural disasters has included expanding roles for military actors and expanded use of military assets. This was most apparent in the response to hurricane Mitch in Central America, the second earthquake in Turkey and most recently in the floods in Mozambique. In accordance with the Guidelines for Use of Military and Civil Defence Assets in Disaster Response, military assets are placed at the disposal of the host Government. In the case of Mozambique, the Government requested the United Nations to coordinate their use. To do so, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations agencies in-country, under the logistical leadership of WFP, established a United Nations joint logistics coordination centre, within which the military

staffed a liaison cell, the civil-military operations centre. Increasingly, both military and humanitarian personnel have recognized the need to improve the civil-military relationship, and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs therefore continues to conduct and upgrade civil-military cooperation courses.

74. The primary resource base for response to crises at present is assistance from Member States. This could be supplemented by increasing the involvement of the private sector, which has vast resources at its disposal. Locally, in most disaster-affected countries the private sector does become involved in assisting those affected by natural disasters. This was, for example, the case in Orissa, India, after the cyclone. The challenge is to bring the resources available to international corporations to bear in response to natural disasters and crises by working to enhance their sense of responsibility as international citizens and their understanding of the ways in which they can be of greatest help. Close cooperation with the private sector as provider of expertise, equipment and services offers major new opportunities. International humanitarian agencies need to develop a coordinated approach to such cooperation. Member States could assist the process by considering measures such as tax benefits to companies involved in such activities.

75. The earthquakes in Turkey and Taiwan Province of China and the floods in Mozambique vividly illustrated the power of the media to influence public opinion and thereby augment the scale of response. However, the role of the media is not limited to provision of information to the public in countries that may be able to assist with the response. The media's role as providers of information to the disaster-affected population can also be valuable. In that context, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has concluded an operational agreement with WorldSpace as a provider of digital voice broadcasts that will enable the Office to take advantage of its broadcasting infrastructure by interrupting broadcasts to provide information on emergency-related issues. At times, however, media reporting can be sensationalist and unhelpful. This can make the task of the Government of the disaster-affected country and humanitarian personnel working under considerable pressure more difficult than it already is. It could be helpful if some media professionals were to specialize in natural disaster reporting, just as some do in war reporting.

76. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is also convening, in cooperation with the Government of Switzerland, a high-level intergovernmental conference on cooperation and coordination in crisis management in Europe and the newly independent States. The conference, known as the Fribourg Forum, is being held on 15 and 16 June 2000, to address, *inter alia*, the duplication of initiatives and collision of mandates among key actors. The Forum aims at establishing a regional policy framework for improving the effectiveness and consistency of national and regional policies that have an impact on decision-making processes and delivery of emergency humanitarian assistance.

Social problems and opportunities

77. In modern armed conflicts, millions of refugees, internally displaced persons and other civilians affected by war have been affected by the psychosocial consequences of crisis. Many have suffered severe mental distress caused by traumatic experiences of having witnessed or been subjected to gross violations of human rights such as killings, torture, sexual violence, family separation and displacement from home. War-affected individuals run the risk of depression, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress disorders or other forms of mental distress caused by their experiences. The long-term consequences for children can be particularly serious. Similarly, disasters such as earthquakes, floods, cyclones and technological accidents, which can cause massive destruction, can lead to the development of anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as alcohol and drug abuse among survivors. Severe mental anguish will sometimes affect an individual's life and community long after the war or the disaster has ended, causing continuing instability.

78. Humanitarian agencies are increasingly recognizing the need to implement psychosocial assistance programmes in emergencies. UNICEF is now implementing psychosocial programmes as one of its core commitments. Another example is the UNHCR survivors of violence programme in Sierra Leone. However, such assistance is not yet systematically included in relief programmes. A major challenge for humanitarian agencies is to understand that the mental health consequences of emergencies can cause a level

of distress that may hamper recovery as well as rehabilitation and to incorporate culturally appropriate psychosocial assistance programmes in relief efforts, in cases of both war and natural disasters. Member States may wish to encourage increased international attention to this issue.

79. A major aspect of civilian suffering in armed conflict arises from violence and abuse against women, in particular sexual violence and rape. In addition to physical violence, an increase in sexually transmitted diseases, including human immunodeficiency virus/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS), and unwanted pregnancies continues to affect women and girls. This often carries over into post-conflict environments, where high incidences of domestic and sexual violence abound. In addressing humanitarian and post-conflict peace-building priorities, the task of protecting women and girls from gender-based violence and sexual exploitation and ensuring their physical and psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration therefore requires more focused attention, as does the challenge of developing mechanisms to prevent future violations of this kind.

80. Moreover, in many war situations, dramatic social changes lead to shifts in gender roles. As a result, an increased number of women become heads of households and assume greater responsibility for providing for their families, educating their children and caring for older relatives. In such circumstances, the role of women in holding communities together becomes more prominent. While additional burdens are placed on women in conflict situations, such situations can also open up new opportunities for the economic and political empowerment of women and for strengthening their contribution as leaders to the decision-making processes that affect their lives. Women have demonstrated that they are often best placed to ascertain the most effective approaches for consolidating peace at the ground level. Incorporating women's perspectives in peace negotiations and in the delivery of humanitarian assistance thus provides an important means of ensuring that a sustainable basis is provided for post-conflict reconstruction. However, women still have little involvement in peace negotiations and political decisions. In East Timor, the consultative group of the National Council of Timorese Resistance has only 2 women representatives out of a total of 15. In Tajikistan, in the 26-person National Reconciliation Commission there is only one woman. At the first peace talks in Arusha on Burundi, only 2 of the 126 delegates were women and to date the women's delegation to the Arusha peace process continues to hold the status of permanent observer, and does not enjoy full participatory rights. Yet experience has shown that where women are invited to contribute to peace negotiation processes, as was the case in Guatemala and South Africa, they do contribute important perspectives and succeed in incorporating a range of critical issues into the peace agreements. Member States may wish to emphasize the importance of women's participation in peacemaking and peace-building.

III. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian response and the role of technology in mitigating the effects of natural disasters and other humanitarian emergencies, including conflicts, with particular reference to the related displacement of persons

81. The theme for the humanitarian segment of 2000 of the Economic and Social Council addresses several of the key issues that captured the attention of the humanitarian community in the past year. Efforts to mitigate the effects of natural disasters and other emergencies are central to the work of United Nations agencies and their partners. The actual and potential role of technology in support of those efforts is increasing almost daily. Technology can, and already does, contribute to disaster response and to improved coordination of effort. It can strengthen the preparedness capacity of Governments in disaster-prone countries.

82. The displacement of populations is a disruptive and sometimes destabilizing consequence of both natural disasters and emergencies resulting from conflict. Strengthening the coordination of the humanitarian response in such situations will maximize the effectiveness of international efforts and minimize the risk of duplication and waste.

83. While accurate figures are impossible to obtain, it is broadly estimated that about 60 million people, or 1 per cent of the world's population, have been forcibly uprooted from their homes in recent years as a result of

natural, environmental or technological disasters, or as a consequence of war. Action to reduce these numbers and to assist the victims of disaster to become productive members of society again, must be a priority for the international community.

84. The present report cannot hope to cover all the aspects of so vast a theme. Instead, its focus will be on two elements that can have a positive impact on the joint efforts of Governments, multilateral organizations and civil society, harnessing technology to improve the prediction, mitigation and response to natural disasters and other emergencies; and strengthening coordination of international efforts to respond to the needs of people displaced as a result of conflict and generalized violence.

A. Role of technology in mitigation of and response to natural disasters and other emergencies

85. Technology can now play a valuable role in helping Governments and international organizations to respond to disasters. Different technologies may be of value in all phases of a disaster and in all sectors of activity. This section, however, focuses on technologies that can have a particularly positive impact on the coordination of the response and can be developed as effective tools by Governments in disaster-prone countries in support of indigenous efforts at prevention, mitigation and response. These technologies include GIS global positioning systems (GPS), remote sensing from satellites and aircrafts and telecommunications. Integrated use of remote sensing and GIS can help early warning and tracking of disaster. It can also support disaster impact assessment as well as the planning, implementation and monitoring of the relief effort by combining various layers of geographical data. GPS can provide detailed geographical locations for the feature of interest (e.g. a refugee camp). Remote sensing can help with early warning and tracking of disasters such as changes in forest cover due to deforestation or tracing the paths of hurricanes. Efficient telecommunications can support all aspects of the activities of Governments, international organizations and affected communities.

86. In examining the relative value of different technologies in specific situations and countries, a number of factors have to be taken into account. These include their reliability, sustainability, compatibility with existing systems, simplicity of operation, immediate availability, but above all their cost.

The use of remote sensing in natural disasters

87. Remote sensing images from satellites with resolution down to one metre can provide information for risk and damage assessment and hazard mapping and help to prevent, estimate and reduce the effects of disasters.

88. In the area of cyclone detection and warning, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) global programme of cyclone warning uses satellite monitoring, airborne surveillance and radar in order to track down cyclones and feed information to "predictive" models to increase reliability of warning. This is done at the global level and can reduce losses through effective monitoring and warning. The difficulties lie in the dissemination of information at the national and local levels.

89. At the global level, remote sensing is being used to monitor crop and weather conditions throughout the growing season at 10-day intervals, as well as to gauge the impact of drought through indices such as the Normalized Difference Vegetation Index (NDVI), the Vegetation Condition Index (VCI), the Cold Cloud Duration (CCD) and the Temperature Conditions Index (TCI). At the national and local levels, the information from these indices can also be used to monitor the growing season and assess the extent of the drought to help national authorities take measures to acquire food or to adjust cultivation methods in case of water shortages. The FAO Global Information and Early Warning System (GIEWS) has developed software to assist in the analysis of these types of image and has made it available to national and regional food information systems.

90. Satellite images are also used for environmental assessments related to the presence of refugees. Satellite images have been used successfully to monitor and assess forest degradation in refugee hosting areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya and the United Republic of Tanzania. Aerial surveys have been carried out for detailed refugee camp mapping and have been combined with field data in GIS.

91. During the relief operation in Kosovo, UNHCR used detailed aerial photographs to estimate shelter damage. That information was combined with numeric

codes for the villages surveyed and stored in a GIS. The approach facilitated the production of synthetic maps to assist decision-makers in the planning of humanitarian relief and housing reconstruction efforts. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has also produced a detailed atlas of such maps.

Geographic information systems and integrated data collection efforts

92. GIS are computer systems consisting of hardware and software for storing, manipulating, analysing and displaying geo-referenced or location-based data. In terms of the mitigation of and response to natural disasters and population displacements, GIS contribute to laying the foundation for information management and mapping products to provide synthetic overviews and detailed analyses. GIS also serve as a coordination tool by bringing together different types of information. Different data extracted from the GIS and presented in a comprehensible map-format provide a common and uniform language to all actors involved in a relief operation. Input data to GIS include field data, such as population distribution in the area of interest, GPS data on exact geographical positions of the parameters to be analysed, such as damaged buildings, and remote sensing images, such as satellite data on the extent of fires.

93. Information inputs for GIS must come from a wide range of actors and agencies. It is critical that Governments and organizations that collect and act on this type of information agree on the critical core data content and the corresponding standard formats in which it should be shared. The necessary organizational steps must be taken to obtain and share the information, since no single organization or entity has access to or can provide all of the critical information. At the multilateral level, the Geographic Information Support Team, consisting of donors and United Nations agencies, works towards a systematic approach to collect, share and distribute geographical information within a common frame of reference, thus providing a support tool for a coordinated response to natural disasters and humanitarian relief operations.

94. At the national level, data can be produced through collaborative efforts between Governments and other organizations. Many Governments are limited in what they can do in this area, however, by the cost of investing in resources, collection and preparation of data, as well as training of personnel. Nonetheless, for the short term, it is recommended that Governments develop national policies on collection and sharing of data related to disaster mitigation efforts. This can be done in collaboration with relevant United Nations organizations to facilitate common approaches early on in the planning process and through existing international programmes such as the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and the Global Disaster Information Network. Such efforts by Governments to establish systems at the national level in disaster-prone countries deserve consistent support from donors.

95. During the Mozambique floods, GIS were used to support logistics and coordination. A comprehensive list of affected locations of concern was developed. This depicted the province, district, standard name, coordinates of each location, as well as a unique numeric code, which allowed easier sharing of data between the agencies involved. Maps depicting priority needs were also provided for emergency planning and decision-making. At the end of the operation a functioning GIS system was transferred to the Government and should assist it to be better prepared for future emergencies and to respond more effectively when they occur.

96. Field data collection is an essential element in contingency planning. At the field level, local and regional information networks can be developed to ensure that geographical information, for example, topographic maps and results from local surveys, are included in the GIS prior to the onset of an emergency. Recent lessons learned (East Timor, Kosovo and Mozambique) clearly indicate the importance of having most of the required information as well as specialized GIS staff in place before the emergency.

Global positioning systems

97. All data input to GIS must be geo-referenced. For point data, such as locations of displaced persons, refugee camps, water sites and toxic storage sites, hand-held GPS receivers can in general provide field personnel with estimates (latitude/longitude) on the geographical position of the feature of interest. The exact positioning of geographical data as input to GIS for more efficient coordination is one of the key benefits of GPS in relief operations. GPSs have also been used for commodity tracking and tracking of humanitarian personnel deployed in danger areas, while UNDP has supported the preparation of GIS-based district hazard maps as a component of disaster

management planning in Ecuador, India, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Peru and Viet Nam.

98. In many developing countries maps are outdated, contributing to confusion during emergencies. Data from GPS receivers mounted on vehicles can be input to GIS and subsequently used to plot the route of a road not marked on available maps. Donors should consider providing support for the updating of maps in disaster-prone countries.

Telecommunications

99. All elements of natural disaster preparedness and response depend on timely and accurate information and on appropriate and affordable mechanisms to process, interpret and share the information. The provision of information depends on the availability of reliable telecommunications and appropriate information-processing technology. The regulatory environment for the use of telecommunications in humanitarian assistance has been greatly improved by the adoption of the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations on 18 June 1998. While the Convention is already being applied in practice, its ratification by the largest possible number of States is important.

100. When a disaster damages ground communications, satellite-based mobile telephone systems provide essential emergency communication tools. The wider applicability of this technology in the future is promising, as the cost of global communications is expected to decrease.

101. In the mitigation phase, telecommunications can be used to support the timely transfer of information and analysis. Engineers and scientists at the international and regional levels carry out the exchange of information. The data transmitted can then be used together with historic data to create disaster-related models. However, it is often the case that developing countries are unable to make use of such information in a timely manner owing to weak telecommunications infrastructure. Such a lack of timely data can hinder efficient coordination. Even in areas where the telecommunications infrastructure is adequate, the incompatibility of data and systems in use can also be a constraint. The Integrated Regional Information Network, an Africa-based information service provided by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, has pioneered the use of new telecommunications technology to deliver its special reports, daily updates and weekly digests to some of the most remote parts of the continent. Last year the Network's web site won an award for being one of the top 10 public information sites in Africa.

102. WMO runs a global communications network for disaster preparedness under the World Weather Watch programme, which operates at the global, regional and national levels. It includes a Global Observing System (GOS), Global Telecommunications System (GTS) and Global Data-Processing System (GDPS). All these can support response and recovery efforts in the context of crisis management, coordination and information dissemination.

103. Some private sector corporations, including Ericsson of Sweden, have expressed interest in supporting work to establish rapidly deployable telecommunication packages in emergency situations. Such partnerships with international business have enormous potential to strengthen capacity in disaster-prone countries, as well as to stimulate productive investment in countries emerging from crisis. On behalf of the United Nations system, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is in discussion with Ericsson to agree on the modalities of future cooperation in this area.

Activities at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels

104. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna in July 1999, adopted a resolution entitled "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", which calls for action to implement an integrated, global system, especially through international cooperation, to manage natural disaster mitigation, relief and prevention efforts through Earth observation, communications and other space-based services. In its report,[3] UNISPACE III recommended specific actions to be taken by the international community relating to disaster management, such as initiation of a comprehensive programme to promote the use of satellite communications and Earth observation data for disaster management by civil protection authorities, in particular in developing countries. The Office for Outer Space Affairs of the Secretariat has begun to develop, in cooperation with space agencies and space-

related international organizations, a training module that could be used by civil protection and emergency response agencies in developing countries to incorporate the use of space technologies in disaster management.

105. Within the United Nations system, several organizations carry out activities to enhance disaster management with the use of space technologies. For example, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) cooperates with the Council of Europe in carrying out research studies on the use of space technology in disaster management. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) works closely with the Emergency Relief Coordinator in order to increase ITU involvement in and support to disaster communications. UNHCR cooperates with the European Commission on the use of high-resolution satellite images for monitoring refugee camps to improve the efficiency of its relief operations and to assess environmental conditions through detailed monitoring of the refugee-hosting areas. FAO has been providing an operational real-time environmental information service, using low-resolution remote sensing satellites such as ARTEMIS, its Agromet database, Africover and corporate GIS databases for environment and natural resource management and natural disaster monitoring, assessment and planning, as well as GIEWS. FAO, in cooperation with concerned United Nations agencies such as WMO, UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Council for Science (ICSU) and space-related agencies worldwide, has been promoting the Integrated Global Observing Strategy. Currently, FAO is hosting the secretariat for the Global Terrestrial Observing System (GTOS), with sponsorship from WMO, UNEP, UNESCO and ICSU.

106. Coordination of the use of information technology within the United Nations system is facilitated through two mechanisms, the United Nations Information Systems Coordinating Committee (ISCC) and the Working Group on Emergency Telecommunications (WGET), a subcommittee of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee that includes the United Nations entities concerned as well as the other major partners in international humanitarian assistance.

107. Information technology support to the existing mechanisms for United Nations disaster assessment and coordination, the on-site operations coordination centre and inter-agency assessment missions, as well as to field offices of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continues to be developed. ReliefWeb and information technology projects such as the Global Disaster Information Network facilitate the provision of timely information to all partners in humanitarian assistance. For the further improvement of the policy and regulatory framework of information technology and telecommunications in humanitarian assistance, efforts towards the widest possible application of the Tampere Convention are needed.

108. Another noticeable improvement in the application of technology is the use by members of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group of advanced methods and equipment to find and rescue victims in urban search and rescue operations. The Group encourages search and rescue teams that use advanced technological equipment to train other teams in using the technology as well as to transfer such technology by making in-kind contributions to the search and rescue teams of the disaster-affected country whenever possible. However, no matter how promising the technology, it is of limited value if it cannot be deployed in time to be used. In response to natural disasters, time is always at a premium.

B. Strengthening the coordination of humanitarian response in situations of displacement

109. The past year has seen a particular focus on the general situation of internally displaced persons, as well as on their plight in countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Burundi, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The year was also characterized by an unprecedented effort by the Emergency Relief Coordinator and the agencies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to improve the coordination and delivery of programmes for internally displaced persons. Those efforts involved the development of new policies, training programmes and guidance material for humanitarian workers as well as practical action to improve the quality and coverage of operations in the field.

Global figures

110. Current estimates suggest that the number of persons displaced worldwide may total as many as 60 million. Of these, about 11.5 million are refugees,

having crossed an international border in their search for safety.[4] For internally displaced persons, statistics are much less precise, but estimates are that at least 17 million and up to 20-25 million persons are currently displaced within the borders of their own country as a result of armed conflict or generalized violence.[5] In addition, rough estimates indicate that another 30 million persons are displaced as a result of natural, environmental or technological disasters.[6]

111. Systematic estimates of displaced persons are not possible at present for several reasons, including the lack of a clear agreement on the point at which a person ceases to be counted as internally displaced, lack of monitoring capacity, lack of access in some countries, reluctance of some Governments to recognize internal displacement as such and use of different definitions by different entities.

Categories

112. International efforts to assist the displaced must be based on a clear understanding of the specific roles and responsibilities of Governments, which have to care for their own internally displaced population.

113. Although refugees and internally displaced persons share the basic predicament of having been forced to flee from their homes, there are major differences in the international response to their plight. Because a refugee is by definition a person who is outside his or her country, he or she is entitled under international law to international assistance and protection under the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the 1951 Convention[7] and the 1967 Protocol[8] relating to the Status of Refugees, and other relevant regional instruments. Internally displaced persons, on the other hand, remain in their own country and the *de jure* responsibility for guaranteeing their rights as citizens rests of course with their own Government. However, in many cases of civil unrest, people are displaced in areas where there is no effective civil authority.

114. The precarious situation of people uprooted by natural or environmental disasters can in some cases make them vulnerable to infringements of their rights, especially when protracted situations of internal displacement caused by natural disasters overlap with conflict. However, the predicament of these internally displaced persons is related primarily to the loss of homes and livelihood. The main task of Governments and international organizations in such cases is to bring relief in an effective manner. The constraints confronted in such operations are related mainly to the availability of resources and the capacity for rapid response.

115. Persons displaced by armed conflict or generalized violence are usually also in need of assistance, in the form of emergency relief and support for social integration and durable solutions. Their overall predicament is not so easily addressed, however. The causes that led to their displacement may not have been removed, making it impossible for them to return to their homes in the foreseeable future. It may also not be easy to guarantee their security and basic human rights in the areas to which they have been displaced.

116. Although the issue of response to natural disasters has been treated in earlier sections of the present report, the plight of those displaced by natural disasters has not received particular attention, owing to a lack of detailed information on the subject. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports separately to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the activities of her office in relation to refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR, including returnees and 5 million internally displaced persons. The following sections will focus on the problem of displaced persons in situations characterized by armed conflict, generalized violence or coerced movements of populations, but who remain within the borders of their own countries.

The international response

117. In over 20 major crisis situations, the United Nations is seeking to address the needs of displaced populations. In 17 such situations a humanitarian coordinator or a lead agency for humanitarian response has been appointed who is leading the effort.[9] In another seven countries, the resident coordinator is in charge of coordinating the activities on behalf of the displaced.[10] In 1999, 7.5 million internally displaced persons worldwide received assistance under the leadership of UNHCR. WFP estimates that in 1999 over 22 million of its food aid beneficiaries were internally displaced persons. In addition, among organizations outside the United Nations system, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) estimates the number of internally displaced benefiting from its assistance at 9.5 million. However, some crises

of internal displacement are extremely fluid. Humanitarian agencies are often operating at the limits of their capacity, in terms of both human and financial resources, in order to respond to newly arising needs. A separate paper describing the status of the response by Inter-Agency Standing Committee members and their partners to the situation of internal displacement in each of the countries listed above will soon be available.

The policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

118. Since internally displaced persons remain by definition civilians of their own country, the international responses to specific situations have been designed in collaboration with Governments and local authorities in each country affected. It had been clear for some time that arrangements for effective coordination of the international response needed to be reviewed and that clearer lines of responsibility and accountability needed to be agreed. A series of reviews were therefore undertaken, within key agencies, as well as in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee as a whole. As a result of those reviews, new institutional arrangements were endorsed at a meeting of the Committee on 5 April 2000. The Committee's policy paper on the protection of internally displaced persons is based on the premise that responsibility for displaced persons lies first and foremost with their national Government. However, the capacity and/or willingness of the authorities to fulfil their responsibilities in some situations of armed conflict may be insufficient or lacking. The policy therefore urges humanitarian agencies to cooperate with national and local authorities or other actors in order to support and supplement their efforts on behalf of the displaced.

119. The policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee seeks to build a collaborative approach around the special expertise and capacity of agencies and organizations within as well as outside the United Nations system. In the context of humanitarian response it recognizes the particular roles that may be played by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNICEF, WFP, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, as well as ICRC, and it reaffirms the coordinating responsibility of the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator as the inter-agency focal point for internally displaced persons at the Headquarters level.

120. At the country level, the Committee's policy vests the overall responsibility for the response to the needs of the internally displaced in the resident/humanitarian coordinator, as for example in Angola, or where a humanitarian lead agency has been designated, the representative or country director of that agency. He or she recommends to the Emergency Relief Coordinator an allocation of responsibilities for the support of internally displaced persons. Under his or her lead, the country team develops a joint plan to respond to the needs of the displaced. The Committee's Supplementary Guidance to Humanitarian/Resident Coordinators also gives directions on dialogue with Governments and local authorities, on the implementation of responsibilities and on the planning of programme activities.

121. In adopting that guidance, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee has sought to clarify ambiguities regarding the coordination of the international response. It is recognized, however, that the arrangement must prove itself through effective action on the ground in specific crises. Senior officials representing the Committee will therefore regularly review the effectiveness of coordination and operational arrangements in specific countries. In this, the Committee and its Working Group are supported by the network of agency focal points on the internally displaced. In recent months inter-agency teams have reviewed the situation of internally displaced persons in Angola and Colombia, while the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons visited Burundi, at the request of the Committee, as well as Angola, East Timor and Georgia (planned for July 2000).

Constraints and solutions

122. In responding to crises of internal displacement, Governments and international organizations must cooperate to develop capacity and mobilize resources in three ways: (a) targeting the special needs of internally displaced persons as an integral part of strategies to respond to the needs of populations affected by humanitarian crises; (b) reaffirming the importance to internally displaced persons of sustainable livelihoods while displaced, and of durable solutions, even while the crisis is ongoing; and

(c) providing assistance to and protection for civilians during and after their flight.

(i) The special needs of the internally displaced in an overall context of instability

123. The needs of the displaced are multi-faceted and a large range of activities is required in response. Emergency relief and immediate protection for civilians during their flight must be complemented by care and maintenance programmes to stabilize the condition of those who have reached areas of relative security. And even while the crisis is still evolving, longer-term efforts must aim at guaranteeing the safety and future livelihood of the displaced and at finding durable solutions.

124. Many internally displaced persons live in camps or camp-like settlements where assistance can be targeted at their specific assessed needs. However, many others are taken in by host communities, often staying with family or friends. The most effective assistance strategy is usually to address the needs of internally displaced persons together with those of local residents also affected by the crisis. Host communities share the burden of the displacement crisis and may require outside support themselves. International assistance is currently being provided to host communities and the displaced living with them, *inter alia*, in Afghanistan, Angola and Uganda. A balance has to be found between cases where the internally displaced receive help from specially targeted activities and those cases where they are better assisted through more general effort.

125. As a matter of principle, in virtually all displacement crises, humanitarian organizations strive to respond to the needs of the war-affected communities in an inclusive manner. The needs of the internally displaced cannot be dissociated from those of the broader population affected by crises. The response must be embedded in a comprehensive strategy for reaching those in need. The 2001 United Nations consolidated appeals process will adopt such an approach to defining the special needs of internally displaced persons, within an overall strategy addressing the needs of all vulnerable groups in specific crises. In the recent consolidated appeals for Angola and Burundi, the approach had already been adopted, in contrast to the earlier appeals, in which the needs of the displaced were identified separately.

(ii) Sustainability in displacement and durable solutions

126. Protracted conflicts may result in long-term displacement. Even if hostilities come to an end, it is often difficult to revert to the demographic situation that existed before the outbreak of the crisis. Large numbers of displaced persons may be forced to remain where they are, with no prospect of return. Sometimes considered unwelcome in their own country, those people may remain victims of frozen political situations where their rights are not recognized, becoming dependent on outside assistance for many years.

127. Although the complexity of most displacement crises necessitates a strategic response with a medium- and long-term horizon, the international community and donors often concentrate their attention on short-term relief operations. Few resources are left for longer-term action. However, even during an ongoing crisis it is essential to seek ways to restore the self-sufficiency of the displaced and to promote their integration in the local community, where they can lead productive lives.

128. This means, for example, working with local authorities to provide them with land, seeds and tools and access to the labour market. It also means ensuring that local services, such as public transport, housing, medical and social services, children's education and professional training are extended to them. The right of the displaced to live in dignity with a sustainable future livelihood, regardless of their location and circumstances, must be reaffirmed as a matter of principle. A sustained commitment of donors is required in supporting activities aimed at achieving this right.

129. Problems are often encountered when trying to promote the integration of the displaced and to seek solutions that would allow them to reconstruct their lives while in displacement. However, recent experience, for example in Georgia, demonstrates that, when return is not immediately feasible, integration of the displaced into their new environment with the objective of promoting their self-reliance can be the best strategy to prepare them for ultimate return, when conditions allow. Agencies should systematically cooperate with national and local authorities in exploring the full range of options for durable solutions, even in ongoing displacement crises.

(iii) Protection

130. Frequently, forced displacement results from violations of international humanitarian law or human rights law. International human rights instruments, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949[11] and the Optional Protocols thereto of 1977,[12] which contain a number of provisions for the protection of civilians during armed conflict, are of direct relevance to internally displaced persons.

131. Since the appointment in 1992 of a Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, substantive progress has been made in mobilizing international attention to the problems of the internally displaced and identifying their specific rights and needs. The Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement,[13] issued in 1998 as a result of those efforts and based on existing principles of international law, offer important guidance. Agencies have recognized in them a valuable instrument for strengthening the linkage between assistance and protection in all phases of displacement. Reference materials intended for humanitarian personnel in the field, based on the Guiding Principles, were developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and published in 1999.[14] The Inter-Agency Standing Committee has mandated the development of a comprehensive training package on dealing with internal displacement, which will be ready for trial in the field in the second half of 2000. Thanks to its modular design, the training package can be adapted to specific contexts. It should contribute to a better understanding by all those involved with protection issues in crises of internal displacement.

132. Protection is best promoted through a multi-dimensional approach. The dissemination of international law, operational, legal and judicial initiatives, reinforced international presence, negotiations with state and non-state actors and the incorporation of protection features in assistance programmes may all be elements of an overall strategy. Governmental and non-governmental entities, civil society groups and a wide range of international organizations have a role to play in promoting the protection of the displaced.

IV. Observations and recommendations

133. The year 1999/2000 brought extraordinary challenges to humanitarian organizations. The events in East Timor, Kosovo, Mozambique and elsewhere stretched the capacity of humanitarian agencies, and of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, to the limits. In reviewing the dramatic developments in the field of humanitarian affairs, it is apparent that the number and range of organizations involved in humanitarian response to crises is increasing, that the needs of people affected by these emergencies are rising and that the coordination challenge is growing as a result. In such a situation, the ability of organizations to respond rapidly and effectively is critical. In order to do so, agencies, as well as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, need adequate resources available immediately, as well as rules and procedures that facilitate rapid reaction. Neither of these conditions exists as yet. A renewed commitment by Member States to multilateral leadership of the international humanitarian response, provision of adequate resources to support that leadership and approval of effective administrative procedures, are therefore the essential precursors to the continued strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian assistance.

134. The recommendations arising from the present report are outlined below.

A. Coordinated response to natural disasters and complex emergencies

135. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish:

(a) To urge Member States to commit adequate resources to humanitarian operations through multilateral channels;

(b) To endorse the need for the application of special administrative rules and procedures that would allow the United Nations to respond more quickly with personnel and logistics resources to address natural disasters and complex emergencies;

(c) To encourage Member States to contribute generously to the consolidated appeals for 2000, taking into account the importance of greater balance in geographical and sectoral coverage;

(d) To encourage Member States to contribute generously to the requirements for security of personnel in the 2000 consolidated appeals;

(e) To encourage Member States to consider special contributions towards those consolidated appeals which have received a low response in recent years, including those for the Congo, Somalia and Tajikistan;

(f) To welcome mainstreaming of gender in consolidated appeals, and to encourage steps to mainstream gender and child concerns in all appeals in 2001;

(g) To recognize the value of assigning a leading role to women in the design and implementation of humanitarian programmes and to encourage agencies to develop further their partnerships with local women's organizations;

(h) To encourage Member States to stimulate support for emergency response from private corporations, including by providing tax relief for such activities;

(i) To welcome moves by private corporations to support mitigation, preparedness and response activities in disaster-prone countries and to encourage more corporations to take part in such initiatives;

(j) To encourage cooperation between intergovernmental bodies and Member States to strengthen early warning, prevention and preparedness mechanisms for natural disasters and other emergencies;

(k) To encourage further cooperation between the United Nations system and regional organizations in order to increase the capacity of regional organizations to respond to sudden-onset disasters;

(l) To encourage United Nations agencies and departments to strengthen existing early warning, preventive and preparedness mechanisms and to engage the active participation of United Nations country teams in that respect;

(m) To encourage initiatives to develop a legal framework for international assistance in the wake of natural disasters and environmental emergencies, outlining the responsibilities of countries receiving and providing support. Member States may wish to consider drafting a convention on the deployment and utilization of international urban search and rescue teams. Such a convention would provide a working framework for complex issues, such as utilization of air space, customs regulations for import of equipment, respective responsibilities of providing and recipient countries, that have to be resolved prior to the international response to a sudden-onset natural disaster.

B. Protection of civilians in armed conflict

136. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish:

(a) To call on Member States to accelerate the process of signing and ratifying the Statute of the International Court of Justice, so that the Court may be established in the shortest possible time;

(b) To call on Member States to sign and ratify the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel (resolution 49/59, annex);

(c) To reconfirm the importance of safe, unimpeded and unrestricted access for humanitarian organizations to those in need;

(d) To urge Member States to ratify at the earliest opportunity the Optional Protocol to the Convention of the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and to provide assistance to programmes for disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating children;

(e) To welcome the intention of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to convene a reference group on children in armed conflict;

(f) To welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1261 (1999) and the initiative to place child protection advisers in peace operations as a way of ensuring consistent attention to the protection of children through the peace consolidation process.

C. The role of technology

137. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish:

(a) To urge Member States to sign and ratify the Tampere Convention on the Provision of Telecommunication Resources for Disaster Mitigation and Relief Operations;

(b) To encourage partnerships among the Governments of countries affected, humanitarian agencies and specialized companies to promote the use of technologies for humanitarian operations, including for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel;

(c) To encourage standardization or complementarity of telecommunications and other technological equipment required in emergency operations;

(d) To encourage standardization and sharing of geographical data, including remote sensing images, GIS and GPS data, between Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations;

(e) To urge Member States to remove or suspend restrictions on the use of technology during response to sudden-onset emergencies;

(f) To urge donors to make available to disaster-prone countries technologies and appropriate training that will enable them to strengthen their capacity to prevent, mitigate and respond to disasters;

(g) To encourage Governments in disaster-prone countries to establish national space-related information infrastructures to facilitate data exchange relating to disaster mitigation and response, including the necessary trained personnel, and to encourage donors to support such initiatives.

D. Coordinated response to crises of displacement

138. The General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council may wish:

(a) To reiterate that the primary responsibility for protection of and assistance to civilians in crises of internal displacement lies with the national authorities of the affected countries;

(b) To encourage humanitarian and development agencies to collaborate closely with Governments and local authorities in countries affected by internal displacement in order to strengthen the capacity of the authorities to ensure adequate levels of protection and assistance;

(c) To appeal to Governments and local authorities in countries affected by internal displacement to extend full cooperation and access to the agencies of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee in their efforts to bring help to the displaced;

(d) To support initiatives to raise the awareness of all relevant actors, including national and local authorities and agency field staff, of the rights of the internally displaced, as spelled out in the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement;

(e) To encourage action by organizations of the United Nations system and partners in the Inter-Agency Standing Committee to ensure that a collaborative approach with clear lines of responsibility and accountability is consistently implemented in all countries affected by internal displacement and that the arrangements are subject to continuous and rigorous review;

(f) To encourage Governments, United Nations humanitarian and resident coordinators and country teams to make use of the expertise available from the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNICEF, WFP, the Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons, as well as ICRC, in addressing crises of internal displacement;

(g) To encourage Governments concerned to recognize their responsibilities in searching for early and durable solutions to the plight of internally displaced persons, to recognize the right of the internally displaced to a sustainable livelihood and to enjoy the rights of ordinary citizens while displaced and to call on donors to support such initiatives;

(h) To urge donors to ensure adequate financial support for international activities on behalf of the internally displaced, including activities for strengthening their protection, and promoting self-sustainability and durable solutions.

Notes

[1] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3), chap. VI, para. 5.

[2] A/CONF.183/9.

[3] *Report of the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, Vienna, 19-30 July 1999* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.3).

[4] *Source:* UNHCR. These figures do not include an additional 1.3 million asylum seekers.

[5] In 1999, the United States Committee for Refugees listed 41 countries with a total of over 17 million such internally displaced persons. The United States Committee for Refugees cautions, however, that the total number may be much higher. The Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons uses a figure of 20-25 million.

[6] *Source:* WFP, from the Norwegian Refugee Council.

[7] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 189, No. 2545.

[8] Ibid., vol. 606, No. 8791.

[9] Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Indonesia, Georgia, the Republic of Congo, Russian Federation/Chechnya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, the Sudan, Tajikistan, Yugoslavia, excluding Kosovo, and the Horn of Africa.

[10] Azerbaijan, Armenia, Colombia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka and Uganda.

[11] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, Nos. 970-973.

[12] Ibid., vol. 1125, Nos. 17512 and 17513.

[13] E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2.

[14] The *Handbook for Applying the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement* and the *Manual on Field Practice in Internal Displacement* (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, November 1999).

Annex I

Follow-up to the agreed conclusions (1999/1) of the humanitarian affairs segment of the Economic and Social Council[a]

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
Principles	3. The Council reaffirms that humanitarian assistance should be provided in accordance with and with due respect for the guiding principles contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 46/182.	The Guiding Principles annexed to resolution 46/182 are routinely included in agreements signed with parties to conflicts allowing for the delivery of humanitarian assistance to victims in need. For example, in Somalia ground rules are being developed that would formalize the understanding between warring parties and humanitarian organizations. Such agreements continue to form the basis for humanitarian action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, the Sudan and elsewhere.
Security	4 (a). The Council calls upon all parties to take measures to ensure the safety and security of international and local humanitarian personnel.	In its resolution 54/192 of December 1999, the General Assembly recommended specific measures for action aimed at strengthening the safety of United Nations and associated personnel, including a call on all States to become parties to the 1994 Convention on the Safety of United Nations and Associated Personnel. As at 15 May 2000, 43 States had signed the Convention, while 29 States had ratified it. The Assembly also recognized the need for a full-time security coordinator. The Secretary-General has announced his intention to make such an appointment. The Assembly requested the Secretary-General to prepare a report containing a detailed analysis and recommendations addressing the scope of legal protection under the 1994 Convention. This analysis will be submitted to the Assembly in a separate report.
International humanitarian law	4 (b). The Council calls upon all States to consider signing and ratifying the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.	As at 6 April 2000, there had been 8 ratifications and 96 signatures. The following countries have ratified the Statute: Belize, Fiji, Ghana, Italy, Norway, San Marino, Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago.

[a] See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 3* (A/54/3), chap. VI, para. 5.

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
Consolidated appeal process	5 (a). The Council notes that there is substantial further work to be done to strengthen the consolidated appeal process, especially in the area of prioritization within and among various sectors of activity, and to ensure an effective system for strategic monitoring and evaluation.	The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Improving the consolidated appeal process remains one of the most active subsidiary bodies. Substantial improvements have been made during the reporting period on a number of technical aspects, including prioritization and strategic monitoring and evaluation.
	5 (b). The Council also notes the importance of including security requirements of humanitarian personnel in the consolidated appeals.	A comprehensive review of the consolidated appeal process was carried out between November 1999 and April 2000. Recommendations resulting from that review centre on increasing flexibility, improving financial tracking and impact analysis and the broad area of advocacy and marketing of appeals.
	5 (c). The Council calls upon the international community, particularly donor countries, to increase their contributions to all consolidated appeals.	For 2000, many of the appeals included a security component. Requirements for 10 countries/regions totalling $8.5 million were included. As at 19 May 2000, $1,998,492 had been pledged/received in response to those requests. Donor response to the consolidated appeals for 1999 is considered satisfactory, with a global coverage of nearly 75 per cent. As at 19 May 2000, coverage of the 2000 appeals stood at 26.8 per cent.
Financing of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs	6. The Council requests the Secretary-General to continue his efforts to place the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on a sound financial basis.	In the current biennium, the estimated extrabudgetary resources represent 88.2 per cent and the regular budget 11.8 per cent of the overall resources required by the Office, as compared with 89.1 and 10.9 per cent, respectively, in the biennium 1998-1999.

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
Transition	**10 (a). The Council stresses the need for early joint planning and prioritization, the central role of capacity-building and the importance of a clearly agreed division of labour through inter-agency collaboration.**	Under the leadership of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Post-Conflict Reintegration produced a thorough report identifying five major interrelated areas or gaps affecting transitional operations: inadequacy of national capacities; political persuasions of bilateral actors; unsynchronized transitional funding; planning and programming of transitional activities by agencies; and inadequate efforts to reach agreements based on common strategic objectives.
	10 (b). The Council emphasizes that the planning for rehabilitation should begin at a very early stage, local actors should be involved, existing local capacities should be integrated and the assessment of needs should be demand-driven rather than agency-driven, with a view to ensuring effective response.	Guided by the findings of the report, four countries were identified for further study, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Congo and Somalia. Inter-agency missions took place during April and May 2000 to those countries in order to identify creative and practical solutions to the problems associated with post-conflict transitions and relief to development linkages. It is foreseen that the missions will lead to the development of comprehensive guidelines tailored to post-conflict crisis situations that will address shortcomings in coordination and funding mechanisms in a practical manner.
	10 (c). The Council further emphasizes that a more systematic evaluation is needed and that lessons learned from previous experience should be more systematically taken into account.	
	10 (d). The Council affirms the view of the Secretary-General that contingency planning for both sudden reversals and unexpected opportunities is to be undertaken.	The Inter-Departmental Framework for Coordination Team is developing improved mechanisms to support contingency planning and preparedness.
Sanctions	**10 (e). The Council also recognizes the need to give proper consideration to the issue of the humanitarian impact of sanctions, in particular on women and children, with a view to minimizing the humanitarian effects of sanctions.**	The issue of the humanitarian impact of sanctions was given particular attention in the report of the Secretary-General to the Security Council on the protection of civilians in armed conflict (S/1999/957 of 8 September 1999). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on the Humanitarian Impact of Sanctions has been charged with follow-up to the recommendations in that report.
Disaster prevention, preparedness and response	**12 (a). The Council emphasizes the need for further concrete measures to reduce the vulnerability of societies to natural hazards, particularly in developing countries, small island developing States and landlocked countries.**	A number of specific activities have been undertaken. A comparative country index of vulnerability and disaster risk is being prepared as part of a global disaster vulnerability report intended to promote national efforts to mitigate risks. An inter-agency initiative is also under way to develop a core set of concepts, principles and general guidelines to facilitate inter-agency collaboration in disaster reduction issues.

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
	12 (b). The Council also reaffirms that within such preventive strategies, disaster preparedness and early warning systems must be further strengthened at country and regional levels, *inter alia*, through better coordination among relevant United Nations bodies and cooperation with Governments of affected countries and regional and other relevant organizations.	An international partnership, the ProVention Consortium, was launched by the World Bank on 3 and 4 February 2000 with the aim of reducing the human and economic costs of natural disasters in the developing world. The United Nations, in collaboration with the Organization of African Unity, is planning a symposium on natural disaster management in Addis Ababa in June 2000.
	13 (a). The Council stresses the need to ensure adequate assessment of and follow-up to these innovative approaches and to draw the appropriate lessons for improving preparedness and response capacities and the integration of disaster reduction components into future development planning. The Council recognizes that these experiences could be developed and adapted to other situations that may arise in any country or region.	With respect to small island nations, a comprehensive vulnerability analysis is being made in Montserrat of those areas being resettled following the volcanic eruptions of 1997. The analysis will enable disaster risk considerations to be fully factored into land use planning and construction, ensuring that future vulnerability is greatly reduced. During 1999 and early 2000, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Reference Group on Natural Disasters examined how to improve various aspects of the inter-agency response. The Group formulated a set of recommendations, currently being implemented, which include improved preparedness measures and early warning systems in disaster-prone countries, improved training for the United Nations disaster management teams and, in particular, a much greater interaction with the Governments of affected countries, at the national and local levels, with the affected communities and with the local humanitarian networks. Recommendations were also formulated for improving inter-agency needs assessment and coordination with bilateral actors.
Links to development	15 (a). The Council notes relief agencies in the planning for the meeting of immediate needs should place these needs in a perspective of sustainable development whenever such an approach is possible. 15 (b). At the field level, the Council calls on the resident coordinator and relevant agencies to improve response preparedness and capacity-building, including by	An example of inter-agency cooperation on strengthening response preparedness at the field and headquarters levels was the follow-up to the joint evaluation mission. (UNDP/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs/United Nations Children's Fund and Pan American Health Organization) after hurricane Mitch in Central America, which was reported on to donors in December 1999. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is expanding its network of regional disaster response advisers, who

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
	maintaining a dialogue with all major actors.	are responsible for support of the emergency response and response preparedness activities of United Nations resident coordinators and disaster management teams in the respective regions. Agencies' participation in United Nations disaster assessment and coordination courses and emergency missions is also increasing. In the field of emergency telecommunications, inter-agency work on minimum standards of telecommunications for safety and security of humanitarian personnel is continuing in the Working Group for Emergency Telecommunications.
	15 (c). At the inter-agency level, the Council encourages the Emergency Relief Coordinator, members of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and other members of the United Nations system to expand their efforts to promote response preparedness for natural disasters and other emergencies at the international, regional and national levels.	
	17 (a). The Council stresses that while development agencies must become involved early in a crisis, humanitarian agencies, within their respective mandates, must also integrate a development perspective in their planning.	The policy of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee on assistance to those living in *regroupement* camps in Burundi was amended to allow for the inclusion of educational activities as part of the emergency humanitarian response.
	17 (b). The Council also recognizes the importance of maintaining throughout the emergency, wherever possible, a certain degree of developmental functions, such as education and health care.	
The Balkans	18 (a). The Council stresses the need for a coordinated and comprehensive approach by the United Nations and other interested partners in planning the transition from humanitarian emergency assistance to rehabilitation and reconstruction in the Balkans.	The 2000 United Nations inter-agency consolidated appeal for the south-eastern Europe humanitarian operation promotes an integrated regional approach that supports the resolution of local crises and the stabilization of the broader region.
	18 (b). The Council requests the Secretary-General to ensure that updated information relating to strengthening coordination of the transition process in the Balkans is made available to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.	The Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme presented an update on the strengthening of a coordinated transition process in the Balkans on 9 February 2000 during an informal meeting open to all Member States.
Strategic planning	19 (a). The Council encourages the further development of the strategic framework concept and in that context requests the Secretary-General to submit recommendations on the	A number of steps have been taken to ensure a more coherent approach between the humanitarian, political and human rights components of the international response to crises. In East Timor and Kosovo this consistency has been

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
	preparation, scope and applicability of strategic frameworks.	achieved through the establishment of integrated peace operations, in which the humanitarian component has been established under the responsibility of a deputy special representative of the Secretary-General alongside the mission components for civil administration, governance and reconstruction and police and military forces.
	19 (b). It calls upon the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to ensure a high degree of coherence between assistance and the political and human rights aspects of the United Nations response while maintaining their separate and mutually reinforcing nature.	In Sierra Leone, a strategic framework is being developed that clearly outlines the respective roles of the political/military mission, the assistance agencies and the human rights organizations, seeking to ensure that each is able to contribute effectively to the overall goal of peace-building.
	19 (c). The Council in particular encourages enhanced inter-linkages between the consolidated appeal process and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and requests the Emergency Relief Coordinator, in collaboration with the United Nations development agencies, to intensify efforts in this respect at the country as well as the headquarters level. To this end, the Council underlines that cooperation between all actors, including United Nations bodies and non-governmental organizations, should be strengthened.	Work is under way to assess the appropriateness of applying the United Nations Development Assistance Framework in six countries where consolidated appeals are being applied.
Funding mechanisms	20. The Council calls on donor countries to ensure that their funding systems facilitate early, integrated approaches for recovery. Furthermore, the Council calls on donor countries to ensure continuity in and adequacy of funding from humanitarian assistance through transition activities to development cooperation, and reaffirms that contributions made for humanitarian assistance should not be to the detriment of resources made available for international cooperation for development.	Efforts by the United Nations to coordinate programming and funding requests have not been matched by more timely funding. In East Timor, notwithstanding joint presentations of emergency and recovery funding needs, efforts continue to be hampered by inadequate resources and slow disbursement of funds. A similar situation exists in Kosovo. In Sierra Leone, slow disbursement of funds for demobilization has led to delays in disarming fighters.
Post-conflict situations	21. The Council stresses that sustainable reintegration strategies, including comprehensive mine action programmes, wherever required,	Mine action programmes are routinely included in the consolidated appeals for countries affected by landmines.

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
	are a substantial prerequisite for stabilization in post-conflict situations. The Council urges the Secretary-General and the Emergency Relief Coordinator to ensure that priority attention is given to effective programming in this field.	
Children	22. The Council also calls for systematic, concerted and comprehensive inter-agency efforts on behalf of children, as well as adequate and sustainable resource allocation, to provide both immediate emergency assistance to and long-term measures for children, throughout all phases of an emergency.	In its resolution 1261 (1999), on the question of children and armed conflict, the Security Council established the protection and welfare of children affected by armed conflict as an issue that belongs on its agenda. The Secretary-General will submit a report on the implementation of resolution 1261 (1999) in July 2000. In line with resolutions 1261 (1999) and 1265 (1999), the Security Council incorporated the protection of children into the mandates of the peacekeeping operations for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Sierra Leone. Child protection advisers were appointed as integral elements of these two peacekeeping operations. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee plans to convene a reference group on children and armed conflict in late 2000.
Internally displaced persons	23 (a). The Council calls on all States to apply internationally recognized norms with regard to internally displaced persons. 23 (b). It also calls for further strengthening and coordination of international efforts for those persons in this regard.	Internally displaced persons have been the focus of much attention within the Inter-Agency Standing Committee process. Besides reviewing coordinating structures relating to internally displaced persons in specific countries, the committee issued a generic policy on the protection of internally displaced persons (December 1999) and guidance to humanitarian coordinators on responsibilities for United Nations coordination in crises of internal displacement (April 2000).
Gender	24. The Council stresses the need to integrate a gender perspective in the planning and implementation of activities and recommends that such a perspective be further promoted.	Following the approval of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee policy statement on gender in May 1999, an inter-agency workshop aimed at developing tools to integrate gender into the consolidated appeal process was held in July 1999. Country team members from Angola, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Tajikistan participated in the workshop and developed a checklist to integrate gender into needs assessments and planning of humanitarian assistance activities. In order to ascertain, a year after its adoption, whether the provisions

Issue	*Recommendation*	*Status of implementation*
		of the gender policy have been implemented, the Committee decided in April 2000 to request its Sub-Working Group on Gender to review the implementation of the policy statement, including the mainstreaming of gender issues in consolidated appeals.
Older persons	25. The Council recognizes the specific vulnerabilities of older persons in humanitarian emergencies and requests the Secretary-General to include in his report to the council at its next humanitarian segment measures taken by the United Nations to respond to the needs of older persons in humanitarian emergencies.	A background note on the elderly and humanitarian emergencies was considered by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee. In February 2000, it was agreed that the World Health Organization would lead a short-term task force to draw up an account of agency action in support of elderly victims of humanitarian emergencies.

Annex II

Lessons learned from the flood response in Mozambique

1. Mozambique's recent flood tragedy was brought about by a conjunction of several factors: an unusually heavy rainy season in the region where nearly half of Mozambique's rivers have their origins and the enormous amount of water tropical cyclone Eline discharged over the already saturated region at the end of February 2000. From the outset, the Government of Mozambique took the lead in coordinating the national and international response to the floods. The National Institute for Disaster Management (INGC), the Government's operational arm, led the huge task of coordinating the national, regional and international support to the affected population.

2. The first wave of flooding left many homeless and without personal effects. Development programmes, where feasible, were immediately retargeted to respond to emergency needs. The first few days of the second flood period saw horrendous pictures being flashed around the world of people stranded as the flood waters rose. It took several days for the response to match the scale of the disaster, which exceeded any normal response capacity. Even after support had been mobilized the same stories continued to be shown, even though the logistics and response capacity was growing daily.

3. The overwhelming response from private, governmental and non-governmental sources turned the humanitarian assistance operation for Mozambique into a positive example of collaboration between the principal actors, that is, the Government, the United Nations, donors, the military and non-governmental organizations. The role of the United Nations agencies was to support the Government, in particular the INGC, in managing the operation.

4. An air operations cell was established by WFP to coordinate the military assets made available by Governments for the rescue of flood victims and the transport of relief supplies. Three United Nations disaster assessment and coordination teams were fielded as an integral part of the INGC coordination structure. The teams strengthened the Institute's information management capacity and were instrumental in setting up a data bank for the tracking of contributions. They also assisted in the organization of the regular coordination meetings, chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, in which government departments, donor representatives, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations participated.

5. At the international level, the Secretary-General nominated a special envoy for the relief effort. On 10 March 2000, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/96 L, entitled "Assistance to Mozambique following the devastating floods", in which it urged the international community, the United Nations, the specialized agencies, international financial institutions and other bodies of the United Nations system as well as non-governmental organizations to aid the country. A total of $4 million was advanced from the Central Emergency Revolving Fund to support immediate relief operations.

6. Of particular note was the strong civil/military cooperation. There were massive military resources available for the relief operation. At one stage nearly 60 helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft were made available from Belgium, France, Germany, Malawi, South Africa, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America. As a result of this experience, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is exploring standby arrangements for airlift capacity.

7. The relief operation offers a number of lessons, which should be taken into consideration when preparing for future relief operations of such a dimension. These include:

(a) A national disaster plan should be prepared, together with a national disaster management policy. It should outline sectoral responsibilities for ministries in the event of natural disasters;

(b) Awareness campaigns can be effective to reduce the impact of natural disasters for communities at risk. Existing campaigns should be strengthened and extended to all vulnerable provinces;

(c) The database for mapping vulnerable areas needs to be improved. Support from the international aid community would greatly help in that effort;

(d) The role of the military in the acute response phase of an emergency should be strengthened and should be specified in the national disaster plan. Regional plans should be developed to ensure ready access to the military assets of neighbouring countries;

(e) Post-emergency evaluations should become a regular feature after each major emergency. They should be used as an opportunity not only to review the response effort, but also to look ahead at preventive approaches that could be adopted. Such a review should include engineers, environmentalists and specialists in agriculture, as well as others in the scientific and technological community;

(f) Since the headwaters of major rivers rise in other countries, the regional dimension of flood disasters should always be taken into account, including in early warning efforts and water management;

(g) The strengthening of the regional response to major emergencies should be explored;

(h) The relationship between the impact of a disaster and the poverty level of a region should be reviewed. It is also important to know the extent to which human activities in vulnerable areas aggravate or contribute to the severity of disasters. Strengthening the capacity of national authorities, United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations to carry out vulnerability assessments should contribute to a better understanding of these factors and would constitute an important element for future preventive measures;

(i) More sophisticated early warning capacity needs to be developed in the private and public sector;

(j) The United Nations country disaster management team has an important role to play in developing and maintaining contingency and preparedness plans.